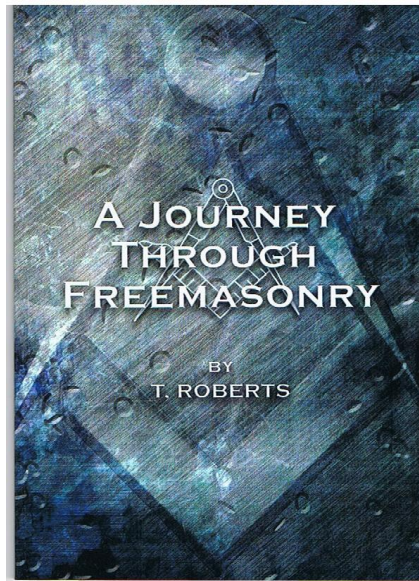


AJTM 2nd Edition



A Journey through Freemasonry

*A compilation of Masonic Topics
From around the World
A book for the Craft from Initiate to Master,
Interesting Reading, touching on Masonic Philosophy.
Family Virtues, Morals, Ethics, & Respect.*

Additional Chapters / Pages

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FINAL FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

**If you wake up in the morning with more health than illness, you are more
blessed than the Million who will not survive this week**

Terry Roberts 2012

2 Your Philosophy

South Africa

Philosophy, in the minds of many, is concerned with the abstract study of concepts and ideas far removed from the practical issues of everyday world. They sometimes characterise a philosopher as a long haired eccentric living in a lonely attic, subsisting on a few crusts of bread, whose chief interest is an attempt to master the secrets of the universe regardless of whether his discoveries have any useful existence.

Another concept, generally accepted, recognises philosophy as a study that should make life here and now as intelligible, meaningful and purposeful as possible. Philosophy, in this sense, is defined as the study and discovery of the principles that cause, control or explain facts and events. It is further defined as serenity and wisdom that comes from knowledge of general laws and principles that govern the universe. "Philosophy" means a way of life rather than a theory of absolute reality.

In the light of concept, every thinking individual works out some sort of philosophy. The nature of their philosophies varies greatly among different individuals; Catholicism is a philosophy, as is Buddhism and other forms of religion. Freemasonry and Humanism are also philosophies.

When one concerns himself with the nature and purpose of the universe and man's place in it, he becomes a philosopher. The quality of one's philosophy determines the nature of his character, his general attitudes, and whether or not he gets the best out of life.

A mature philosophy provides one with a goal and purpose in life. Without an adequate philosophy, he is an aimless wandering creature living in a state of fear, anxiety, insecurity and indecision. Many of the neurotics and psychotics in our society today are victims of unsatisfactory and inadequate philosophies for living in this rapidly changing world.

The simple truth is that every person works out some sort of philosophy depending on his experiences. It may not be done consciously and it is certainly done with differing degrees of success. Many are satisfied to accept a philosophy ready-made in the form of some religion, cult, or philosophical system, absorbing it unconsciously.

They modify it only slightly to meet their personal requirements. There are those who work out their own philosophies, deliberately and consciously. They may avail, themselves of the help of the sages of all ages, the great religions and philosophies of the world, since in them are many elements that are enduring for all time.

But also, there are vast new areas of knowledge crying out for interpretations, new areas of social innovations, throughout the world demanding understanding and direction.

"To die ignorant" said Carlyle, "that is a real tragedy." To live without a philosophy of life is equally tragic since a life without a guiding philosophy may easily become narrow and selfish, producing intolerance, and prejudice.

A purposeful, intelligible, and meaningful life, on the other hand, displays habits and living thinking that will keep us active, ever-learning and constantly growing. It is potentially the life of greatest happiness and contentment.

The philosophy of Freemasonry has within it the different elements and the blueprints for each Mason to work out for himself a satisfactory and workable philosophy of life. Masons in past generations have shown capable of careful and sustained thinking. They have known their own minds and have had strong convictions by which they were prepared to stand.

If Freemasons are to walk surely and resolutely in today's troublesome world, if they are to develop sound, wholesome personalities, if they are to be capable and useful citizens, "leaders of the people by our understanding and foresight" it is imperative that they encourage and develop their philosophical capabilities and thus attain their finest flowering.

A paper by
Leonard Arthur Wenz
Mid 1960's

*Do either you or I know when the thunderbolt will fall?
Then why not enjoy the sunshine of today*
Ibsen – Epigrams

3 A History of Freemasonry.

Staffordshire

The research into the origins and aims of Freemasonry has been ongoing by students of Freemasonry for many years. There is a fairly correct account of the work and progress of Freemasonry following the formation of the Premier Grand Lodge in London in 1717, but prior to that time the records are incomplete. Many were lost or destroyed in the Great Fire of London.

There is evidence of a Masonic guild during the 14th Century, but this was at a time of considerable political intrigue and mistrust, and any society that conducted its meetings in secrecy was naturally suspect. There is plenty of evidence that Trade Guilds flourished under the Norman Kings, primarily to establish a standard of workmanship for the various industries they represented, and pioneered technical education and training for their apprentices.

There is little doubt that all persons admitted to membership of these Masonic Guilds were required to take a solemn oath of allegiance. In 1388 Parliament ordered every sheriff in England to call on all the Masters and Wardens of the Guilds & Brotherhood to send to the Kings Council in Chancery, full returns regarding the Foundation, Ordinances and Property within 12 months. Following this edict we learn that in 1425, meetings of all secret societies were banned by Parliament, and this included the Guild of Masons.

Further back in time, Roman History proclaims that in 714BC there was a College of Masons instituted in Rome, and the Greek & Egyptian builders must have had a thorough knowledge of operative Masonry.

Who were the teachers of these ancient Masons and where did they learn their craft?

There are stories of an advanced civilization with their ancient rites which were destroyed by violent volcanic eruptions, such as Atlantis. Perhaps the rite most closely resembling Freemasonry is that of the Dionysian Architects who were initiated into their mysteries for the purpose of labour and government, they were divided into lodges, each ruled by a Master and Wardens, and in their Ceremonial Observations employed many of the implements used as emblems in Freemasonry. Women were not admitted into the Order, and all distinctions of Worldly Rank were abolished.

The Romans invaded Britain in 43AD, bringing with them trained administrators, builders and other craftsmen.

The descendants of these invaders undoubtedly integrated with the Anglo Saxons and passed on their expertise in building practices.

Christianity first reached this country around 600AD, with Kent being the first region to become Christian, and it is for this reason that Canterbury became the seat of the Chief Churchman of England.

As long ago as the 10th Century, during the reign of King Athelston (The first King to be recognized by all the Kingdoms in England), the first charter granted to Masons as a body in England, was bestowed by King Athelston in 956AD, on the application of his brother, Prince Edwin, who summoned all the Masons in the realm to meet in York, and this resulted in the formation of the Constitution and Charges of an English Lodge.

Although there are no records available of the Ancient Regulations, there are versions of later constitutions written by hand which are mostly quite legible. These of course apply to the science of buildings (Operative Masonry) and has very little to do with Freemasonry as we know it today.

History records that a great impetus was given to the formation of Trade Guilds during the reign of Edward III (1327-1377), which were all based on the larger Cities and Boroughs. It seems that Masonic Lodges were formed within the framework of the Guild of Masons, and from early 1500, Masons on admission to a lodge were given a secret word of recognition which was communicated to them in a sort of initiation ceremony. The first real evidence of Masonic secrets being communicated appears to be around the mid 1600's. We may ask for what purpose were words & signs imported to Masons under an oath of secrecy? To obtain the answer we should consider the problems confronted by these travelling workmen.

Their main purpose was to erect Cathedrals, Churches and Castles, and they were governed by their own supreme authority. They worked in groups or Lodges, often for long periods from their homes and families. They had to build temporary accommodation for themselves on the site, safe storage for their tools, materials, plans and designs. Raw materials had to be obtained, quarried, trimmed and transported for the projects. It was therefore necessary for members to be vouched for by their Master or Wardens in charge of the various Lodges involved.

Replacement of men, fully trained in their respective duties had to be verified, and without some means of checking qualifications, defective workmanship could result in serious consequences. One example of this defective workmanship occurred at the Cathedral in Beauvais, which was started in 1247, taking over 70 years to complete. The height of the vault from the floor was no less than 157 ft. The vaulted roof over the choir collapsed some 37 years after completion, when over 170 tons of stone fell due to defective workmanship.

So it became necessary to take steps to safeguard the good name of Master Masons and Craftsmen. It is probably for this reason that as an apprentice to the Masonic trade, he would be entrusted with a sign, token and word of a Mason and an oath of secrecy, this of course being necessary to ensure they did not become known to unskilled or initiated men, otherwise their value would be lost.

From the ancient Constitutions, we are given a traditional history of the Masonic Craft, with various Legendary, Biblical and Historical characters, and for the science of Masonry. They carry a code of regulations, with items included to preserve and elevate the moral character of the Craftsmen. The 15 points of social and moral conduct enjoin him to Love of God and the Holy Church, To be faithful to his King, To his Master, To do an honest days work for his pay, To do nothing to bring the Craft to shame, and to keep his Masters secrets.

In early days of Freemasonry, there were almost continuous political and religious upheavals, and Secret Societies were not to be trusted. It was necessary for records of meetings to be destroyed, and this explains to some extent the lack of information about the old Guilds & Lodges.

The Premier Grand Lodge was formed in London in 1717, and from that date there is a fairly complete record of the work and progress of Freemasonry in this country, but before that time the records are scanty. There is evidence of a Masonic Guild being formed during the 14th century. This was at a time of considerable Political intrigue and mistrust, and any society with a degree of secrecy was naturally suspect.

There is plenty of evidence that Trade Guilds flourished under the Norman Kings, their object primarily to establish a standard of workmanship for the various industries they represented, later to be pioneers in technical education and training for their apprenticeships. This was followed by a host of activities including the provision of Schools and Hospitals, and the establishment of funds for charitable purposes. There seems little doubt that all persons admitted to membership were required to take a solemn oath of allegiance.

In 1388 Parliament ordered every sheriff in England to call on all Masters, & Wardens of the Guilds to send in full returns to the Kings Council in Chancery, regarding their Foundation, Ordinances and Assets before the 2nd day of February the following year. Following this edict, in 1425, meetings of all Secret Societies were banned by Parliament, and this included the Guild of Masons.

During the Great Fire of London, most records were lost, although from the Great Hall was saved the Grant of Arms to the Ancient Company of Masons, namely a pair of compasses between 3 castles. This is exactly the same as the Coat of Arms presented to the Premier Grand Lodge formed in 1717.

The earliest charter in possession of the Masonic Company was dated 1677, in which Charles II ordained that all Masons, Freemen of the City of London & Westminster, be of one body, Incorporate Politic by the name of Master, Assistants and Commonality of the Masons of the City of London.

The revolution which placed William III on the throne (1688) and subsequent political unrest had given the society a very severe setback. In 1716, the Freemasons comprising the four most active Lodges met in London to review the situation, all Hostelry Lodges, namely:-
The Goose and Gridiron Ale House in St Paul's Courtyard.

Additional pages in the 2nd Edition of A Journey through Freemasonry
The full title is available to order online at: www.guyscliffehouse.org.uk

The Crown Ale House, Parkers Lane.

The Apple Tree Tavern, Covent Garden

The Rummer & Grapes Tavern, Channel Row, Westminster.

They met at the Apple Tree Tavern, Covent Garden, and constituted themselves Grand Lodge Pro Tempore in due form, and forthwith revived the quarterly communications.

On 24th June 1721, the Duke of Montrose was elected & accepted the office of Grand Master, and since that time, a Prince or Nobleman has always held the office of Grand Master.

The country entered into one of its most prosperous periods and Freemasonry prospered. From this time the History of Freemasonry is carefully recorded & makes interesting reading. However, Grand Lodge has passed through some difficult times since its formation. A serious rift developed around 1740 after Grand Lodge decided to alter various parts of the ritual. A number of Lodges refused to accept the changes and they were expelled. This led to the forming of another Grand Lodge in 1753, known as the "Atholl or Ancient" Grand Lodge, with the other one being known as the "Premier or Modern".

These 2 Grand Lodges continued independently for 60 years, until, in 1796, Prince Edward, Later to become the Duke of Kent, was initiated into an Ancient Lodge & voiced a desire to bring about a union of the two bodies. In May 1812, the Duke of Sussex was installed as Grand Master of the Moderns, and the following November, the Duke of Kent as Grand Master of the Ancients. In December of that year, the union was brought about and was known as "United Grand Lodge of England", with the Duke of Sussex as its head.

Terry Roberts
September 2011

Adapted from a paper
Masonry to Freemasonry
By Major H Wilson Keys
PGM Staffordshire
July 1969

7 The Winding Stair

Germany

The Second Degree is all too frequently regarded as little more than a stepping stone between Apprenticeship & Freemasonry. This is a misconception, for the degree of Fellow Craft is of equal importance in the Masonic system with its predecessor and with its successor. There is much to be learned from the symbolism of the Fellow Craft degree and the following article, which has been translated and abridged from "Die Bruderschaft", treats of the symbolism to be found in one portion of the Second Degree.

Looking at the Tracing Board we notice certain steps in front of the Temple. The number of steps varies depending on the Constitution under which the degree is conferred. An explanation of these steps is usually given in the lecture dealing with the tracing Board of the Degree. It can therefore, be read and studied in the ritual pertaining to that Degree. To enlarge on that explanation, to give these steps an even deeper meaning, is the object of this paper

The stair leads to the entrance of a Temple, in front of which are placed the columns J & B. These steps are the symbol of the road which has to be ascended in order to approach the Temple. A Temple on the other hand, is always a sacred place in which the deity is at home, and where man is given the opportunity to approach Deity.

The steps which lead to the Temple have two symbolical meanings. They symbolise not only the road that leads up from earth to heaven, but also the planes which lie beneath. These planes have to be mastered to reach the point where Earth and Heaven meet and to make it possible for men to come face to face with God. The contact between Heaven and Earth could also be established by a ladder, and of this Jacob's ladder is an example.

There are various conceptions as to the number of these planes, the most simple one knows but three - Heaven, Earth and Hell.

In ancient times the Sun and the Moon were considered to be planets and if they are taken separately, we have five fixed Heavens – namely the Heavens of the Air, of the Planets, the Fixed Stars, of the Moon and of the Sun.

Most common was the division into the seven Heavens of the Planets, namely the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. These symbolised the seven steps, each step in fact a temple and the seven floors symbolised the seven Heavens of the Planets. As the Priest or the King climbed up from Temple to Temple, he passed through the seven Heavens to join in the end with the Deity.

The ascent to the Heaven of the Planets was ritualistically enacted in the cults and thus became a part of religious faith which taught that, after the death of the body, the soul ascends to God. This was given a spiritual meaning and is shown in the Mithras Mysteries in which each step to Heaven was only accessible by a metal gate, namely of the metal which was attributed to an individual Planet According to Celsius, the order of metals and Planets was as follows:-

1st Gate		Lead	Saturn
2 nd Gate	Zinc	Venus	
3 rd Gate	Bronze	Jupiter	
4 th Gate	Iron	Mercury	
5 th Gate	Alloys	Mars	
6 th Gate	Silver	Moon	
7 th Gate	Gold	Sun	

The ascent to a higher level of human existence has at all times been one of the most important objects of the esoterics. This inspiration has been present in the most ancient past and is present today. It is also present in Freemasonry.

Freemasonry symbolises the gradual step by step ascent by having various degrees, the degrees of the Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason.

It also has additional degrees which are only proof of the fact that then Freemason may never cease to search for more, for higher knowledge.

The thinking men of the past were confronted with the difficult problem that they had to work on themselves in order to distinguish themselves from the animal and from the average man. They solved this problem by believing that man's endeavour to ascend to greater heights were by necessity, preceded by a descent. The "fall of Man" as narrated in the scriptures is proof of the antiquity of this belief.

Let us pause and think of our objects when we actually do ascend a staircase; we go to work, return home, visit friends, we make a call on an official, go to a lecture Church or Lodge etc.. If we reflect on these different occasions, we must realise that in each case our sentiments are as different as the staircases vary, yet when we descend the very same steps, our sentiments have changed.

We have come to the end of our research. The contemplation of the symbol of the staircase on our Tracing Board. This symbol of ours leads us to considerations which refer to the religious life and experience of humanity. No wonder then that symbols which guide us in this direction, have found their rightful place in Freemasonry and are kept there as a sacred trust. For Sacredness, together with Truth, Goodness and Beauty are part of those values, the achievement of which gives purpose to human life. It is for this reason that they are correctly called humanitarian values.

W Bro Terry Roberts

2011

(Adapted from a translation of a 1960 German paper).

8 Working Tools

Scotland

The three degrees in Freemasonry correspond to the three attitudes of Man-his Body, his Soul (or Ego) and his Spirit. The First Degree refers to morals (in the ordinary accepted meaning of the word) and to the adaptation of the person to be in harmony with his environment; the Second Degree to the training and development of the Ego, ethically and intellectually; and the Third Degree shows the operation of Spirit, in nature as well as in man. With this key in our hands, let us examine more sympathetically and less critically the working Tools of the various degrees.

First Degree-

To begin with the E.A. degree. The tools here are the 24-in. gauge, the mallet and the chisel. We have already seen that these tools were not chosen from the operative point of view, as the 24-in. gauge is an implement which is not likely to be found in the possession of a new apprentice. Then why are the E.A.'s in our lodges furnished with a 24 in gauge? The writer ventures to suggest that in seeking out an answer to this question; we may have a glimpse of a hidden meaning which will make us pause and look round

What does an E.A. do? He works. Marks and indents on the rough ashlar. That is, he works the rough ashlar into due form. He is a worker, an energiser, a moulder; and the object on which he works is the stone. He is, as it were, the *positive*, and the stone is the *negative*. By interpretation, the worker is the Ego and the stone his physical body. His job in this degree is to mould & adapt his personality to harmonise with his surroundings. In doing so he uses as working tools his will power operating through his reason, and governing his emotions. The mallet symbolises the will, the chisel his reasoning faculties, and the 24 in gauge is the physical counterpart of his emotions. This I submit is the true interpretation of the First Degree of Freemasonry.

The compilers of the ritual knew well what they were about when they selected the working tools of the A.E. They could not take the straight-edge as that is a negative, a testing tool, the straight-edge does no actual energising work itself, but merely tests the work that has already been done by other tools. It is applied to the draught cut with the mallet & chisel, and enables the operative mason to see whether the draught he has cut is straight or the surface a true plane; if not, he repeats the chiselling until the surface is true. But this testing process would not harmonise with the philosophy of the First Degree. No negative tool would answer the purpose, so a positive measuring tool was chosen. This point is emphasised in the lecture on the tools when it says that "the 24 in gauge is used by operative masons to measure and lay out their work so as to compute the time and labour it may cost". There is no word of testing here; the candidate is told that the tool must be used to measure, lay out, and compute – all positive actions.

The mallet is the emblem of the Senior Deacon, but is appropriated to the Master by virtue of his unquestioned authority in the lodge, and refers in the Ego, the Soul of the candidate. It is the "I AM", the "I WILL", the forceful individuality, that principle within is which is the "ME" as distinct from "mine". The tool represents the prime mover, the physical force which translates the desire of the will into material manifestation in actual work, and cannot be better expressed than in the words of the ritual – *"The mallet teaches us that skill without exertion is of little avail, that labour is the lot of man"*. This was the sentence pronounced on Adam on his expulsion from Eden – *"In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread"*.

The chisel has a certain correspondence to the sword of the Tyler. The Tyler with his drawn sword stands outside the door of the Lodge guarding its material fabric, and seeing that candidates come properly prepared for initiation. Candidates come with all sorts of things on their persons which must be removed, gently if possible, but forcibly if necessary, and the sword is the emblem of *"persuasion"*. So also the chisel is the implement of *"persuasion"*, it makes an impression on all but the hardest substances, and the mightiest strictures are indebted to its aid. The "persuasion" associated with both emblems is euphemistically called *"discipline and obedience"* - The difference between the two emblems is that the one operates from without, and the other from within; the one is symbolic of external authority, e.g. Civil Law, and the other of Moral Law. Notice that the chisel has no propulsive energy in itself, it is both a recipient and a transmitter. It receives energy from the mallet and passes it on to the stone, and therefore bears out the symbolism of discipline and obedience, and the patience and perseverance which are necessary to overcome all difficulties.

Second Degree.

When we pass to the Second Degree we are on a higher level. Here the physical body is left pretty much out of account. It has already been symbolically brought to its highest point of perfection; it has been trained and disciplined in the First Degree.

At the opening of the Lodge in the Second Degree the Master asks the Junior Warden, "*By what degree in architecture will you be proved?*" "*By the square.*" In this degree proficiency is proved by the square. The candidates are admitted on the angle of the square, which is, one might say, their "*entrance examination*".

If thus passed successfully, the suitability of the physical body is taken for granted, the rough ashlar has been made a perfect cube, and is a fit and proper tenement to house the higher faculties, the "internal and not the external" qualities.

We have said that the three degrees refer respectively to the Body, Soul and Spirit of Man. The body could have no better symbol than the stone of the First Degree. And now in the Second Degree we come to the realm of the Soul, of Ego. We need not enter into debatable ground as to the nature of the Soul, but it may be taken for granted that it may have three aspects, the lowest of which has affinity to the body, the highest, which approximates to the spirit, and the central part which has a relationship with both.

The Working Tools, the square, level and plumb bear out this hypothesis, for the square suggest a rectangle, the symbol of the material, and hence of the lower aspect of the soul. The level, as we shall presently see, refers to the higher aspect, and the plumb to the conjunction between the two.

The plumb is the tool with the most wonderful symbology in the whole collection. It is the central tool in Freemasonry, and also the central symbol – giving a profound meaning to the whole. If one meditates on the lecture on this tool, it is seen that it is in reality a +, for it oscillates from the upright to the horizontal. "The plumb admonishes us to walk upright, to hold the scales level, to make our passions & prejudices (*to say impulses and actions would be more correct*) coincide within the exact line of duty". The symbol here is undoubtedly a +. The square with the lines extended is also a +. This, I think is the true meaning of the square being "*an angle of 90o or the fourth part of a circle*". The level is again a T, the "*tau*" of Egypt, the symbol of life.

A very great deal could be said of these tools in the light of the hints which have been given, but one must be careful in speaking of this. The Cross is probably the most ancient of all symbols, and its true meaning is not generally understood. One of its meanings is "*The gateway from Death to Life*", from the material to the spiritual plane; and there one must leave it to the consideration of those who are interested.. Think of these symbols side by side, and all that they mean.

The E.A. Degree symbolises the furthest point that has been attained by most people – whether in the Craft or out of it. It is the realm of reason and logic and the necessity of work that can be easily demonstrated to all. The Working Tools here, as has been said, are all positive, they are all "*doing*" tools", which make an impression on all but the hardest substance, and the mightiest structures are indebted to their aid". But in the Second Degree we are on a higher plane of thought. The tools are no longer positive, which operate on the person, for we are now in the realms of the intellectual man. We saw in the former degree how the individual uses his tools, i.e. his faculties, his senses, in the shaping of his personality; but we now see something of the individual himself. The tools now are all negative, for "*trying, adjusting and proving*" – tools which can only be used by himself upon himself, "*the root of action*", the motive which impels him to do things – whether to obtain the applause of men, or the ethical motive of obeying the highest law of which he is aware.

The symbols in the Second Degree are the attributes of Reality and Truth, which are the ultimate tests of a F.C. These qualities are abstract, and cannot be measured by material standards, for who among us knows Reality from Illusion; hence the tools here are negative, they are symbols of abstract which can neither be measured nor defined. Think of the inner meaning of the subjects of study of the Craftsmen, as laid down in the lecture on the Tracing Board. They start from the lowest material, and ascending by easy stages, reach even to the high ethereal realms, and what standard have we for measuring proficiency there? We have none; neither does the FC need any, for he either reaches the Master Craft or fails to reach it, and none need know of his success or failure but himself alone. This shows the extreme importance of the square to the philosophy of Freemasonry, and is one of the many points which make us wonder.

We may now see a deeper meaning in the words used by the Master in his address to the candidate in the First Degree when he is about to entrust him with the secrets of the Degree. He says that "*all squares, levels and perpendiculars are true and proper signs to know a Freemason.*". You will therefore stand with your feet in the form of a square. He is then told to advance from the square to the level, that is from the material to the spiritual; and it is in that position, and in that position alone that the Secrets of Freemasonry are communicated. Many of us must have wondered what particular virtue there was in this, the first regular step in Freemasonry, but after what has been said of the symbolism of the tools in this degree, these remarkable words take on a new meaning. We now know that the Secrets of Freemasonry are not physical secrets, but are profound spiritual truths.

Not for nothing are we taught to meet upon the levels upon the chequered floor, for this simply means that we should meet absolutely naked – *metaphorically speaking* – without any of the trappings associated with social position. We should meet Soul to Soul and heart to heart upon the floor of the Lodge, and part on the square, which, of course, here refers to the perfect Ashlar and our dealings with our fellow men.

Third Degree

When we come to a consideration of the Working Tools of a M.M. we are confronted with a more difficult problem than in the two former degrees. We have now entered the spiritual realm, which can no more be measured by purely intellectual standards than the intellect itself can be measured by material standards, each degree must be interpreted consistently in terms of its own subject matter and the sphere to which it relates. This makes the interpretation of the Working Tools of this degree more difficult. We must remember, too, that in the circumstances known to all Craftsmen, the Genuine Secrets of a Master Mason have been lost, and that we have to be content with signs and symbols, and this position is in some measure reflected in the Working Tools of the Degree.

We have seen that the Tools of the First Degree were all positive tools, tools as for doing things as the craftsman seeks to bring rude material into regular form. Those of the Second Degree were "*negative*", tools for "*testing*" his progress through the intellectual realm to the Gate of Life. The Tools of the Third Degree come within neither category, but are related to the Source, and the unfolding, of his spiritual faculties. From this point of view their interpretation is a matter of no small difficulty, and for this task spiritual perception is necessary. The following are a few thoughts that have occurred to me during reflections on this important subject.

At the building of King Solomon's Temple there were three Grand Masters, -, Solomon, King of Israel, Hiram, King of Tyre and Hiram Abith. In the spiritual interpretation of the symbolism of our Craft, these three exalted persons represent the highest elements of Man's spiritual nature. Before the completion of the Temple, their number was reduced to two and the grip and signs of a MM were lost – the sacred Triangle was deprived of one of its members. This member is not restored in our Craft ceremonies, but part of the substitution that takes place in the Third Degree, is the representation of the Third Degree by the candidate. Now the candidate for the sublime degree of a MM, is one who has passed the First and Second Degrees, that is one who has symbolically moulded his material life into a perfect cube and has perfectly adapted that life to its environment, and who has similarly completed the training of his intellectual faculties – and passed his tests in these degrees. Proceeding onwards to the spiritual plane, he becomes the Architect, and now seeks to plan his life according to the Will and Purpose of The Grand Architect of the Universe.; and his instrument of labour in this spiritual work is the Pencil – which may thus be regarded as the symbol of himself as he carried out this great task. But he is never alone in this work. That which is symbolised by the first two Grand Masters is still with him, and if we regard these as symbolised by the compasses and conjoins them with the pencil, we have a restored Triangle. It is not the original but a substituted triangle, and is a valid symbol only in relation to the individual who is carrying out his own task as a M.M. This combined symbol represents two of the working tools – or spiritual powers – by which the M.M. carries on his labours as such. But a third is necessary to the effectual completion of his task – and this is represented by the Skirret – the most important and significant of all the working tools of a Freemason. Again we ask, why was this tool chosen for the instruction of our candidates? As already stated, it is not to be found in the kit of a stone-mason, builder or architect - it is an implement of the garden. The reason probably is that no tool in the operative-mason's kit could so well express the great spiritual lesson that the expert Brethren who formulated our system desired to teach – and the selection of this tool well demonstrates that there is a great spiritual purpose behind our Craft.

The symbolism enshrined in this tool is hidden from the eyes of the profane. As it lies stationary it signifies nothing but a frame on which coil of string is wound, but set it revolving and instantly it bursts forth into life. It embodies the Centre, the most recondite symbol in the whole of Freemasonry, the secret which no one can write, cut, carve, engrave or otherwise delineate, for it cannot be told, but must be found out by each one for himself. The centre is the astronomical symbol of the Sun; and as the Sun is the source of all terrestrial life, so the Skirret represents Deity, the Ruach Elohim (*the Divine Breath*) issuing forth and manifesting itself in the triune form of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty in material creation. It is only by the might of this Power that the M.M. can accomplish his task as such.

We can now understand more clearly the meaning of the point from which a M.M cannot err. No one guided by the spiritual power there represented, can be deceived by the glammers of illusion. If we place this compound symbol on a perfect cube, we have the equivalent of the Altar of the Lodge arranged in the Third Degree. Taking the symbol itself, it represents Divine Radiance shining through perfect Equilibrium and Harmony – a perfect symbol of the operation of Deity manifesting all the superlative virtues, and a potent emblem for a fraternity such as ours, whose acknowledged aim is the propagation and diffusion of the great principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

But there is a further point. The lecture on the tool says – "*The Skirret is an instrument which acts on a centre pin whence a line is drawn to mark out the ground for the foundation of the intended building*" (*Note Centre*). When this is said, the lecturer draws out the string, and the Skirret is set revolving. This simple is one of full meaning. It shows that there is a chalked line, a material line, a Jacob's ladder, stretched between the revolving ethereal heaven and the dense material earth, on which many may, as some thinkers assert, traverse the path which lies between, and attain in this life, while still in the flesh, union with the Divine, or, as it is expressed in the lecture, "*ascend to the Grand Lodge above where the world's Great Architect lives and reigns forever*". And that is the building which Freemasonry is designed to erect

The compasses and pencil which form the Triangle, also bear the same symbolism,. The compasses forming the two upright lines refer to the aspiring Spirit, while the pencil which forms the third line along the base. Thus the reason why an instrument of such universal use as a pencil should be classed as a mason's tool is now clear; the function of the pencil is to mark – it is a material symbol, as contrasted with the spiritual compasses – and this association of the material with the spiritual shows in no unmistakable manner that the possibility of attaining to the highest plane is the heritage of every individual of the human race while still on this material plane.

In conclusion it is hoped that a good case has been made and proved that Freemasonry contains not only the system of ethics which is preached from every pulpit, but that there is a system of philosophy which must appeal to every thinking man as being of the very highest value, it being no less than an epitome of the progress of the human soul tell that soul – after the exercise of his free-will, or freedom of thought - surveys himself from the Middle Chamber of King Solomon's Temple, and holds out his hand for wages. What may those wages be to him? Will they be corn, wine and oil – physical refreshments for the physical body – which is all the earth bound soul can possibly have any use for? Or may he receive Specie – which in this place must necessarily be gold, for the Temple was lined within and without with that metal, the gold of the Wisdom of the Spirit? Or may it even be the reward of the Grand Master, Hiram Abith, who had used the material given to him to such good purpose that his reward was - not that of receiving, but of greater opportunities of *giving*. "*Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord*"

The message of the Working Tools of a Freemason is clear; that we should each and all put ourselves into sympathy and harmony with the higher teachings of our Craft, and also with each other. And when that ideal consummation is reached, the full blaze of Divine Radiance will shine on our Lodges and on ourselves, and through us on the outer world

*Taken from a paper in a Grand Lodge of Scotland 1960's year book
Given to me by W Bro Sandy Penman aged 99yrs 9 mths.*

*W Bro Terry Roberts
October 2011*

19 What is Equality?

Masonry teaches that its members should meet upon the level of equality, but what is equality?

Oklahoma USA

Does equality mean that every man should be the same as every other man? Does it mean that all men should act the same, think the same, have the same amount of education, work at the same kind of job, live in the same kind of home, marry the same kind of wife, ride in the same kind of car and have the same number of children.

Too many times equality has been held up to mean that those who have ambition and are willing to work to improve their position in life should be pulled down to the level of those who are irresponsible, too lazy to do little more than complain.

These people, who are not prepared to do little more than complain, cry out that they should be provided with as much luxury, wealth and respect as anyone else. They demonstrate and shout about equality.

They ignore the true meaning of equality. All men are created equal, but although this means that they come into this world with equal rights, it does not mean that they are entitled to anything for which they do not work or strive to achieve.

We abhor their definition of equality, which is what Karl Marx wrote about. We would call it a combination of communism, collectivism, regimentation and absolute dictatorship.

Today, life moves along at a much faster pace than what our forefather's would ever have envisaged. Invention, Education, New Ideas, Technology, Production, Space Exploration are all speeding along at an alarming pace, and many individuals are becoming nervous wrecks just trying to keep up from being left behind.

Invention and discovery require new thoughts and ideas which are contrary to old fashioned beliefs. Are these thinkers equal to others? There have been great advances in education and knowledge which, for many are difficult to comprehend. Can those who do, be on the same level as those who don't? New methods of production, manufacturing, agriculture, mining, computer technology have been devised by those having ability and experience. Are these people to be put on the same plane as the lazy and indolent?

Should it be said that the likes of Washington, Lincoln, Churchill and all the great men and women of this world are on the same level as the rest of us?
Are they not far superior to the shiftless man who doesn't even try to support his family?

"Equality" might be compared with the word "Free", which is also used in the American Declaration of Independence. Both "free" and "equal" are comparative terms.

Freedom is linked to the extent that it must not infringe upon the right to disagree with others, and have new ideas and thoughts. By exercising this freedom, men immediately become unequal to others, and raise themselves above those around them in whatever way they choose, culturally, financially and mentally.

Equality does not mean that a person is equal to something or some one. It does not mean that anyone should elevate himself or herself so as to be on the same level as others. It means that right to be treated fairly under the circumstances, as their own actions deserve. It means the right to acquire wealth, knowledge, friends, and to pursue happiness, even though some do not desire to take advantage of those rights.

In fact no person is, or ever can be equal to any other person. Statisticians say that no two people ever born in the past or will be born in years to come, have been, or will be exactly alike or "equal" .So it is impossible for anyone to be equal in that sense.

All this, summed up, means that each person is an individual, and should never consent to be "equal" to anyone else, but should be a free agent, not regimented, or the same as the others, yet having equal rights to be unequal. It means that Masonic equality is unlimited individualism, to the extent that it does not infringe upon the rights of others to have the same kind of equality, and to treat others as we would have others treat us.

T. Roberts 2011

From a paper written by Bliss Kelly
Oklahoma USA 1961

20 The Sprig of Acacia

Scotland

In the ceremony of the M.M. Degree, the F.C. who found the body of Hiram Abif planted a "sprig of acacia" at the head of the grave.

The acacia is known as the Wattle, Mimosa, Gum Tree etc., many varieties of which grow in Africa, Australia, Tropical America, etc. Of these only two have special meaning for us: the true acacia – the Egyptian thorn, a variety from which gum Arabic is obtained; the false acacia of American variety, and not grown in the East, as far as is known, until the seventeenth century – it is the common or locust tree, grown for the beauty of its form and yellow flowers in the English garden.

The acacia is the Biblical shittah (shittam wood-plural), a wood sacred to the Hebrews and a sign of immortality. The Ark and Table, the tabernacle and its furniture, and the Altar were made out of it (Exodus 25), and it was credited to resist the destructive attacks of insects.

Some believe that the acacia of Freemasonry is the cassia mentioned in the Bible, and which was supposed to be the "tree of knowledge of good and evil" referred to in Genesis as growing in the Garden of Eden; ".....and planted a sprig of cassia at the head of the grave and went and acquainted King Solomon".

It was natural then, that our early Speculative brethren should use this acacia as the symbol of immortality. The Egyptians paid divine honour to the acacia, and some ancient nations made their funeral wreaths and chaplets of it. It may be permitted to say that its evergreen nature, united to other circumstances, is intended to remind us of the immortality of the soul. The Greek word "axaxua" signifies "innocence or freedom from sin".

Like other sacred plants, such as the palm of the Egyptian Mysteries, the myrtle of the Grecian, and the mistletoe of the Druids, it became the symbol of initiation – in the sense that initiation itself is symbolic of the resurrection.

From a 1970's Scottish Year Book.

21 Masonic Fire *Devonshire*

The firing of salutes of guns to mark special events, or following important announcements, proclamations, etc. is a traditional practice that is still followed today, & it seems that at one time toasts were on certain occasions similarly marked by the firing of a gun or a volley of muskets. There is evidence for this in 18th century literature, newspaper reports & the like. Drinking customs of the 18th century (and before) were often noisy and demonstrative procedures.

Masonic practice merely followed the fashion of the times. Similar customs survive elsewhere in non Masonic connections, the most notable example being the Honourable Artillery Company, which has its own @fire@ after toasts. The association of Masonic fire with gunnery practice goes back to the beginnings of the custom and is, indeed, reflected in the term itself which was originally a word of command 'Fire' and not a descriptive noun. This renders somewhat irrelevant the arguments sometimes now entered into as to whether the term should be 'good' or 'quick' fire.

The earliest descriptions of Masonic fire are given in certain French 'exposures' of the late 1730's & 1740's which detail the procedures observed at what is termed a 'Table Lodge'. The following is a composite description of the toasting routine compiled from translations of two of these 'exposures', beginning with *Le Secret des Franc Maçons* (1742) and continuing with *La Desolation des Entrepreneurs* (1747).

It will be noted that all the terms are derived from gunnery practice; comments and comparisons are given in square brackets. There are similar accounts in English 'exposures' of the 1760's which show that the same sort of customs were by then being practiced in England. It seems quite likely that they had spread from France to this country where plagiarized versions of the earlier [French exposures appeared in translation under various titles

There is no doubt that the descriptions quoted are the source from which Masonic fire is derived and that it does not come, as sometimes alleged, from the action of a stonemason in spreading mortar, nor from a certain familiar sign, although the symbolism of the former and the movements of the latter may later have come to be associated with it.

It will be seen, too, from this that it has no deep significance or symbolism, it is simply a survival of a custom originally carried out as a cheerful, boisterous procedure. If, therefore any other epithet may now be applied to it, 'quick fire' would seem to be more appropriate than 'good fire' and that, furthermore, to view it as something solemn and ponderous is to ignore its origin and to misapply symbolism.

When they take their place at Table, the Worshipful is seated first at the head, in the East; the senior and junior Warden take their seats, facing the Worshipful, in the West; if it is an initiation meeting the Initiate have the place of honour, that is to say they are seated right and left of the Worshipful.

The Table is always served with three, five, seven, or nine courses. When they are all seated each will have a bottle of wine before him. All the terms they use in drinking are borrowed from the Artillery.

The Bottle is called Barrel; some will call it 'Barique' [i.e. cask or powder keg] but that is no matter.

Wine and water are both called Powder, except that the wine is called red Powder, and the other white Powder.

The Routine which they observe in drinking does not permit the use of glasses, for there would not be a whole glass left after they had finished; they only use goblets, which they call 'Cannon'; [compare the term firing glass], when they drink in 'ceremony' the order is given; 'Take your Powder'; everybody rises, and the Worshipful says; 'Load' [in the original French 'chargez' i.e. 'load your cannon' or 'charge your glasses']. Then each of them fills his goblet. The commands follow; 'Present Arms' 'Take Aim'... 'Fire', Grand fire. That is how they designate the three movements they are obliged to observe in drinking. On the first they stretch their hands to the goblet; on the second, they raise them as though presenting arms, and on the last, they drink; while drinking they all watch the Worshipful.

From "A Freemason's Companion"

By

Michael J. Penny
PGM Devonshire
2008

26/2 Additional Gags

Floored

Boy Is Dad going to his lodge again tonight?
Mum Yes, they're putting him in the chair.
Boy That's an improvement. At the pub last week he was on the floor

The Cyclist

A mason was cycling to his lodge meeting when the chain broke. Unable to repair it he started to thumb a lift.
After a while a driver stopped & offered to tow him on his bike to the Lodge.
A brother asked him how he had come into Freemasonry, to which he replied, "Tonight with a free wheel & a cord".

Benevolent

A wealthy brother was asked to donate to charity.
He looked at the Steward and said, "I have a brother with a heart condition, an old Aunt who has been bedridden since childhood, and a father who has never worked in his life.
Now I ask you, if I don't give to my family, why should I give to strangers?"

Use & Abuse.

A mason went for an interview for a job, explaining his qualifications with Masonic inferences.
He then asked for an exorbitant salary, hoping that his Masonic inferences would curry favour.
The interviewer told him that his qualifications were fine.
"What about the salary" asked the mason?
"Halve it and you begin" replied the interviewer.

Phone In

"I love you dear", she told him and with that removed her dress.
"You're everything I'll ever want" I really must confess.
"You're so good to me my darling, so tender & so sweet"
And as she spoke her dainty slip came tumbling to her feet.
She whispered "Honey rest assured my love you'll never lose",
And slid her bra down her arms, and dropped it on the floor.
"A burning love like ours dear, you'll never need to doubt"
She dropped her step-ins from her waist & from them she stepped out
"Remember I belong to you, I'm yours & yours alone".
"Goodnight" she murmured softly, and then hung up the phone